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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION, JUNE 28-30: PROSPECTS FOR
CEASEFIRE; MIDEAST REFORM; PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS; WORLD
ECONOMIC FORUM; IRAQ; US-IRAN RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: A top Kuwaiti official said Kuwait welcomes the ceasefire by three Palestinian factions saying, "Hamas' position has changed, and we welcome this positive change." One commentator writes that Israel bears most of the responsibility for whether the ceasefire will lead to a lasting settlement. Another sees the World Economic Forum meeting held in Jordan last week as part of a "Great Road Map" in support of a "Zionist-American project to create a new Middle East. to be integrated into the Zionist economy."

Two commentators address the issue of reform in the region, feeling that change is necessary to combat terrorism and to "modernize." On the news pages, the Ministry of Education announced an effort to "review" the educational curricula in Kuwaiti schools.

In the lead-up to parliamentary elections, a vote-buying scandal was exposed this week, and one daily published the conservative Islamist Salafi Movement's platform that includes planks on gender segregation in schools and an end to foreign troops in Kuwait. END SUMMARY.

2. News Stories: Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that Sheikh Khaled Salman Al-Jarallah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said Kuwait welcomes the cease-fire, and: "Kuwait's official position towards Hamas has not changed. Rather, Hamas' position has changed, and we welcome this positive change."

On June 28, Al-Qabas front-paged a vote-buying scandal in which a parliamentary candidate was caught receiving money from a constituent. The candidate, who was reportedly paying KD 500 (approximately USD 1500) to those who would vote for him, will face criminal charges.

Al-Rai Al-Aam published an outline of the "the reformist vision" of the conservative Islamist Salafi Movement electoral platform which includes: the removal of foreign military presence from Kuwait; the development of Kuwait's unexploited northern oil fields "without the hegemony of foreign companies;" and the segregation of students by gender at all educational levels, including at foreign schools.

Al-Watan published comments by a conservative parliamentary candidate saying, "liberals cover up their weaknesses by levelling accusations against Islamists." Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that another candidate stated that, "Privatization is a Jewish scheme for taking over the region."

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that Mubarak Al-Mutawa, a Kuwaiti human rights activist and the Secretary General of the International Islamic Committee for Human Rights, stated at a human rights conference in Belgium that, "Kuwait's reputation in the sphere of human rights is very good."

Al-Watan reports on June 30 public comments by the Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Research and Curriculum of the Ministry of Education, Dr. Mohammad Al-Musaileen announcing a Ministry plan to review the Kuwaiti educational curricula to "explore the strengths and the weaknesses" of the current curricula.

Al-Qabas reports on June 30 that the Council of Ministers ratified draft Amiri Decrees for the establishment of four private universities and colleges in Kuwait.

Editorials:

3. "Terrorism's Warm Havens"
Saud Al-Samaka wrote in independent Al-Qabas (6/28): "Our schools are overflowing with terrorist culture, and sources of financing [for terrorists in the Gulf] are limitless. Our government admits that there are hundreds of charitable

committees collecting money without any legal cover. The locomotive of change is drawing near, and Iraq will be the model of this coming era of progress. Therefore, we must be prepared for what is coming and deal with it with transparency."

14. "Separation of Powers"

Liberal editor-in-chief Mohammed Al-Jassim wrote in independent Al-Watan (6/28): "The stability of a political system is vital for development. Our country paid dearly for instability. Since the beginning of the constitutional era, we have argued about democracy, the constitution and the freedom of press in vain. Despite all appearances of progress and prosperity, the problem is upon us."

15. "The Great Road Map"

Hamed Al-Ali wrote in independent Al-Watan (6/28): "How can this criminal entity [Israel] continue to violate all that other countries are asked to respect, be it on human rights issues, WMD, UN resolutions, or impinging on other countries' sovereignty, and still have a leading role at the recent [World Economic Forum] held in Amman? It was clear that America and the Zionist entity were the main two players. [and that] the Zionist-American project wants to create a new Middle East to serve as a 'supermarket' to be integrated into the Zionist economy. The role of the Zionist-Americans is to see the implementation of the Great Road Map, with the Zionists in control."

16. "The Map, If You Please"

Liberal Salah Al-Sayer wrote in independent Al-Anba (6/28): "Many Gulf citizens believe in the status quo, and don't consider the need for a reform road map presented by the American Administration. To believe in the status quo is to be shortsighted. The region is in flux, constants are changing rapidly, and therefore, it is wise to pick up the threads of change. The Gulf region is no exception: it is ideologically antiquated like the rest of the region and in need of a road map of reforms to modernize it. Events in Iraq affirm that America is a close neighbor, and a big sister."

17. "Loyalty to the Coalition"

Naser Al-Otaibi wrote in independent Al-Seyassah ((6/29): "The liberation of Iraq from the grip of a tyrant after thirty-five years is God's blessing, and a great victory for the Iraqi people. This could not have been realized without the courage of President Bush and the support of Prime Minister Tony Blair. People of Iraq, do not rush the departure of the coalition forces, because if they leave the forces of evil will rise again."

18. "For the Truce to Achieve Peace."

Dr. Ayed Al-Manaa wrote in independent Al-Watan (6/30): "The success of the truce between the Palestinians and Israelis which was mediated by the United States, is a positive step. This truce can be a permanent window to peace. Israel bears most of the responsibility since it is the one that usurps Palestinian land, including Jerusalem, refuses the return of Palestinian refugees, and builds illegal settlements. Therefore, if Israel seriously commits itself to the truce, not only will it win American and European approval, but also successive Arab recognition, and will gradually emerge from regional isolation. If not, then a new window of hell will open and only extremists from both sides will benefit."

19. "The American-Iranian Dispute"

Dr. Shamlan Al-Issa wrote in independent Al-Seyassah (6/30): "It is not in the interests of Gulf countries for the American-Iranian dispute to escalate. However, the United States will not pursue a new war in the region, especially as President Bush is heading towards elections in seventeen months. His main focus now is to improve the economy in his country in order to win public opinion and votes."

JONES